



State of Connecticut COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 2, Hartford, CT 06103

Promoting Equality and Justice for all People

Public Safety and Security Committee Public Hearing – February 22, 2022 CHRO Testimony Regarding SB 133 – An Act Allowing Police Officers to Wear Religious Head Coverings as Part of a Police Uniform

Senator Osten, Representative Horn, Senator Champagne, Representative Howard, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding Senate Bill 133, An Act Allowing Police Officers to Wear Religious Head Coverings as Part of a Police Uniform.

As the state agency responsible for enforcing Connecticut's antidiscrimination laws and establishing equal opportunity for all the state's residents through advocacy and education, the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities strongly supports SB 133. Many people wear head-coverings as part of their religious practice. This includes, for example, certain Jewish communities who wear yarmulkes, Sikhs who cover their hair with a dastar, or turban, and certain Muslim women who wear a hijab. Police officers should not be forced to choose between following the practices of their faith as protected by law and a career in law enforcement. Further, reasonable accommodation for religious practices is required by law when it is not an undue hardship for the employer. The accommodation envisioned by this bill has no cost to the employer and serves to both acknowledge the employee's right to practice their faith and show acceptance to the community.

The CHRO appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill and urges the committee to pass SB 133.